



Education Watch

Enhancing Flexibility & Accountability ■ Leaving No Child Behind

U.S. House Education & the Workforce Committee ■ John Boehner, Chairman
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Testing, Accountability Narrowed Achievement Gap in Texas

Annual testing and a system that holds schools accountable for student passing rates have increased student learning and closed achievement gaps between white and minority students in Texas, an Education Trust study released Thursday shows.

According to scores on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS), the achievement gap between white and African American students in the Lone Star state shrank from 36 percent to 21 percent between 1994-2000, and from 28 percent to 17 percent for Latino students over the same period.

The Education Trust report also found that the number of students passing all sections of the TAAS in all grades increased from 56 percent in 1994 to 80 percent in 2000. The report revealed that if all African American eighth-graders wrote as well as their peers in Texas, the national achievement gap in that subject would be cut in half.

"Texas shows us what can happen when schools get the message that failure is not an option, and that poor and minority kids are expected to learn as much as anybody else," said Edward B. Rust Jr., chairman of the Business Roundtable's education task force. "Now it's time to lift student achievement in every state." It is time, in other words, to enact H.R. 1: By holding schools accountable for results, student achievement will increase nationwide.

Message of the Day

H.R. 1 would, for the first time, demand real results from public schools that receive federal education resources.

- ❑ No Child Left Behind establishes a system of rewards and sanctions for states and school districts to hold them accountable for increasing student achievement.
- ❑ The only way for parents to know for certain that students are learning is to measure, and measure regularly.
- ❑ Low expectations translate into poor results -- and leave our most vulnerable children behind.

DAILY EDUCATION FACTS

- According to the Education Trust study, if all African American fourth-graders scored as well on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) as those in Texas, the national achievement gap with whites would shrink by a third in that subject.
- Twenty percent of African American and Latino eighth-graders in Texas met or exceeded NAEP's "proficient" level on the writing test -- twice the national average for Latino students and three times the national average for African American students.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Now more than ever -- our leaders must be open to new and innovative ways to improve the quality of education for all our children." **Duane Parde, executive director, American Legislative Exchange Council, April 17, 2001**